

Message Text

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12

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 ARA-06 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

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SS-15 USIA-06 /071 W

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R 301654Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8867

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MONROVIA 0811

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, AO, LI, US

SUBJ: TOLBERT WAVERING ON ANGOLA?

1. TOLBERT'S RETURN FROM KAMPALA MEETING WITH AMIN, MOBUTO AND BOKASSA HAS BEEN REPORTED IN MONROVIA 0775 AND MONROVIA 0784. EMBASSY'S VIEWS AND RECOMMENDATIONS WERE CONTAINED IN FORMER OF THOSE MESSAGES. THIS MESSAGE SEES POSSIBILITY THAT TOLBERT MAY HAVE SIGNALLED THAT HIS POSITION ON ANGOLA SITUATION, LIKE SIAKA STEVENS BEFORE HIM, IS WEAKENING. FOLLOWING FACTORS BEAR ON THAT SPECULATION.

2. TOLBERT PUT ASIDE HIS TEXT PREPARED FOR RETURN CEREMONY IN MONROVIA, AND SPOKE EXTEMPORANEOUSLY. IT SEEMS POSSIBLE, IF NOT LIKELY, THAT, AFTER PREPARING SPEECH BUT BEFORE HE GAVE IT, HE LEARNED OF SIERRA LEONE'S DEFECTION TO PRO-MPLA CAMP. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCE HE MIGHT WELL HAVE SEEN IT WISE TO TAKE LESS EXPLICIT LINE AS HEDGE AGAINST POSSIBLE NEAR-TERM NECESSITY FOR RETREAT.

3. HIS REMARKS DID NOT REITERATE HIS POSITION ON ANGOLA ISSUE IN PRINCIPLE -- INSISTENCE ON RECONCILIATION AMONG WARRING FACTORS, REFUSAL TO RECOGNIZE OR SUPPORT ANY ONE FACTION. RATHER, HIS ENTIRE EMPHASIS WAS ON CASTIGATION SOVIETS AND CUBANS FOR THEIR INTERVENTION RESULTING KILLING OF AFRICANS.

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4. COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY FOUR PRESIDENTS AT KAMPALA LIKEWISE TREATS ALMOST AS AFTERTHOUGHT THEIR POSITION-IN-PRINCIPLE CALLING FOR RECONCILIATION. COMMUNIQUE MAINLY CONCERNS ALLEGED SOVIET AND CUBAN AGGRESSION AGAINST ZAIRE. IT CONCLUDES ON PLEDGE TO WORK FOR UNITY AND SOLIDARITY IN AFRICA AND PEACE AND PROSPERITY IN WORLD.

5. FACT IS, BOTH TOLBERT INDIVIDUALLY AND FOUR PRESIDENTS AS GROUP ADOPTED SOME NEW FORMULATIONS. THEY ARE EASIER NOT ONLY TO WITHDRAW FROM THAN PREVIOUS STERN INSISTENCE ON GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY IN ANGOLA. THEY ARE ALSO EASIER TO RECONCILE WITH FUTURE ACCEPTANCE OF MPLA VICTORY AS BETTER FOR AFRICAN UNITY/ SOLIDARITY AND WORLD PEACE/PROSPERITY THAN CONTINUED DISCORD.

6. EMBASSY CONCEDES THAT FOREGOING MAY BE SPINNING A FINE THREAD. BUT IF ANALYSIS IS CORRECT, AND TOLBERT IS WEAKENING, THERE IS ALL THE MORE REASON FOR A PERSONALIZED MESSAGE, AS RECOMMENDED MONROVIA 0775.

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